Control Methods

Mechanical- Cultivation (discing or plowing) should not be used to control perennial pepperweed as it will most likely spread the weed and enlarge the infestation. Only after perennial pepperweed is completely controlled, should cultivation be used to help with revegetation of desirable species. If conditions are right (light soil, good moisture, few plants), pulling perennial pepperweed plants is somewhat effective. When pulling plants, pay special care to get as much of the root system as possible. Livestock, especially sheep and goats, can play a role in reducing perennial pepperweed in pastures where there is desirable vegetation. Careful animal management is needed to make this effective.

Biological- There are no biological control agents currently available for perennial pepperweed.

Chemical- Clorsulfuron gives the best control, but it is not registered for use in wet areas and in croplands. Glyphosate and 2,4-D Amine are registered for wet areas, but multiple treatments are needed for these herbicides to be successful. Glyphosate is more effective when it is applied in the fall after the perennial pepperweed has been mowed and the regrowth is then sprayed. As always, read and follow herbicide label directions carefully. Contact your local County Agriculture Department to determine the best herbicide for your situation.

History

Perennial pepperweed is native to southern Europe and Western Asia. Initial infestations of perennial pepperweed into California are suspected to have originated from a sugarbeet seed contamination in the 1930s. Perennial pepperweed has been rapidly spreading since, and can currently be found in most counties of California as well as most states in the western United States.

Distribution

Perennial pepperweed is widely distributed in California and across the United States. In northeastern California, a large infestation occurs along the Susan River in the Honey Lake Valley. Sierra Valley also has numerous sites.

For More Information:

- Plumas-Sierra Counties
  Department of Agriculture (530) 283-6365
  Website: *countyofplumas.com*
- Plumas-Sierra University of California
  Cooperative Extension (530) 283-6270
  Website: *ucce-plumas-sierra.ucdavis.edu/*

Photos, and text provided by:

- Bureau of Land Management
- California Department of Food and Agriculture
- Honey Lake Valley Resource Conservation District
- Lassen County Special Weed Action Team
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services
  Environmental Quality Incentives Program
- USDI Bureau of Land Management's Eagle Lake Field Office

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PERENNIAL PEPPERWEED

AKA: Tall Whitetop (*Lepidium latifolium*)

It Can Be Stopped!

Plumas-Sierra Noxious WEEDS* Management Group

* "**W**e **E**radicate **E**xotic and **D**etrimental **S**pecies"

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Why should I care about noxious weeds?

When noxious weeds spread, they impact the environment. They reduce the biodiversity of native plant communities and rapidly displace other plants that provide habitat for wildlife and food for people and livestock.

Weeds also have an economic impact by reducing the land's productivity and by decreasing the quality and value of crop and livestock production. Some weeds are poisonous to livestock. Some noxious weeds are so competitive that they crowd out all the desirable plants.

Weeds can increase maintenance costs and reduce the usefulness and value of recreation areas. Who wants to hike in noxious weeds?

What can I do?

- Drive only on established roads and trails away from weed-infested areas.
- When using pack animals, carry only feed that is certified weed free (or use pelletized feed).
- Beginning 96 hours before entering back country areas, feed pack animals only food that is certified weed free (or use pelletized feed).
- Remove weed seeds from pack animals by brushing them thoroughly and cleaning their hooves before transporting.
- If you find a few plants and decide to pull them, place the plants in a plastic bag or a similar container and dispose of them property. Root parts can regenerate into new plants very readily from very small pieces.
- Some noxious weeds have pretty flowers and are often picked and used in floral arrangements. New weed infestations can be established when seeds shake off while these "pretty flowers" are being transported, or after the flowers are discarded. Some weeds can develop roots and produce new plants and can trigger a new infestation in your own backyard.
- If you find a weed-infested area, let the landowner or manager know so that they can take steps to control the weeds (or notify your local County Agriculture Department).
- Noxious weed seeds or plant parts may attach themselves to tires, shoelaces, camping equipment, construction equipment, garden tools, or any other surface that contacts an infested area. These seeds or plant parts can then travel hundreds of miles before falling to an uninfested area. To avoid starting a new infestation, please clean all surfaces before leaving any area.

What does perennial pepperweed look like and how does it grow?

HABITAT: Perennial pepperweed grows extremely well in seasonally wet areas such as ditches and stream sides, but it also invades dry road edges and hillsides.

GROWTH: Perennial pepperweed has deep and widely spreading roots, little pieces of which can start a new plant. The stems and leaves have a waxy coating, making it harder for herbicides to stick. The lance-shaped leaves are about 6 or more inches long and up to 2 inches wide, with the basal leaves being larger than the stem leaves.

FLOWERS: The white flowers are small, numerous, and fragrant and resemble baby's breath. The seed pods are very small, rounded, and flattened.

HEIGHT: Perennial pepperweed stems grow 2 feet to 6 or more feet high, and plants often form a thick monoculture.

SEEDS: The seeds are tiny and produced in abundance. Perennial pepperweed is an extremely aggressive weed because it spreads both by producing seeds and growing from root pieces.